



U.S. Agency for  
International  
Development

Bureau for  
Global Health

# COUNTRY PROFILE

HIV/AIDS

## VIETNAM

The first case of HIV/AIDS in Vietnam was detected in Ho Chi Minh City in 1990. Since then HIV prevalence has increased rapidly among injecting drug users (28 percent in 2002) and among sex workers and their clients. Sentinel surveillance in 2002 showed high rates among sex workers in key areas: Haiphong (8 percent), Can Tho (11 percent), Hanoi (15 percent), and Ho Chi Minh City (25 percent). Although the majority of HIV cases currently occur among injecting drug users (57 percent of all reported cases), the sexually transmitted cases have continued to increase (1.38 percent in 1995, 5.8 percent in 2000, and 8.4 percent in 2002).

Current Number of Adults and Children Living with HIV/AIDS	77,000
MOH Maximum estimate of the number of PWA (April, 2003)	305,000
Total Population (March 2002)	79,700,000
Estimated Adult HIV Prevalence (end 2003)	0.3%
HIV-1 Seroprevalence in Urban Areas (Sentinel surveillance 2002)	
Population most at risk (sex workers and clients, patients seeking care for sexually transmitted infection, or other persons with known risk factors)	24.3%
Population least at risk (pregnant women, blood donors, or other persons with low risk factors)	0.88%

Government of Vietnam, Ministry of Health, Sentinel Surveillance, UNAIDS

The epidemic in Vietnam is concentrated in large cities such as Ho Chi Minh, Hanoi, and Haiphong, as well as in the provinces of Binh Dinh, Can Tho, Quang Ninh, and An Giant (along the Cambodian border). High rates of sexually transmitted infection increase the likelihood of continued spread.

## NATIONAL RESPONSE

Vietnam began addressing the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the early 1990s. Although it established a National Standing Bureau to respond multisectorally in 1995, this bureau was dismantled in the summer of 2003 in favor of management under the Ministry of Health's Department of Preventive Medicine. Although there were Provincial AIDS Committees established in all 61 provinces, these committees were also merged into the preventive medicine departments with the exception of the Ho Chi Minh City Provincial AIDS Committee. The government has implemented a relatively successful program for blood safety and conducts HIV/AIDS surveillance, with HIV/AIDS reporting from all provinces and sentinel surveillance in 21 provinces. Vietnam has also established a successful condom social marketing program, although demand for condoms often exceeds the national supply. Many HIV-prevention activities such as peer education, although successful, are small in scope and coverage because of limited resources.



Map of Vietnam: PCL Map  
Collection, University of Texas

For the better half of 2003 and early 2004, Vietnam developed its first-ever National Strategy on HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control for the period 2004-2010 with a vision to 2020. This strategy, approved in March 2004, is fairly comprehensive and borrowed greatly from international expertise and local experience. In particular, it addresses new issues of harm reduction, and stigma and discrimination. Under this strategy, Vietnam will try to keep HIV prevalence at less than 0.3 percent by 2010. Activities will focus on: (1) increasing general population knowledge on HIV transmission; (2) reinforcing life-skills education programs in schools; (3) controlling transmission through groups with high-risk behaviors by introducing harm reduction activities among injecting drug

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users and commercial sex workers; (4) needle and syringe exchange, and 100 percent condom-use programs; (5) social marketing of condoms; (6) improved surveillance; and (7) improved care and treatment for people living with HIV through comprehensive care and support. The strategy also encourages the involvement of people living with HIV in addition to greater involvement of nongovernmental organizations and the private sector. Additionally, the strategy mentions the provision of antiretroviral therapy to eligible people, with a goal of treating 70 percent of AIDS patients by 2010, with added commitment to the World Health Organization "3 X 5" initiative. Diagnosis of sexually transmitted infections and prevention of mother-to-child transmission will be addressed, as well as care for HIV-infected children.

## USAID SUPPORT

Since 1998, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) has provided HIV/AIDS support to Vietnam from USAID/Washington, through the Asia Near East regional program. The focus of this support has been to help Vietnam strengthen its capacity to address HIV/AIDS, as well as tuberculosis and malaria, through a large-scale prevention, mitigation, and care program. In 2003, USAID established a regional HIV/AIDS office in Bangkok, from which future HIV/AIDS efforts in the region will be conducted. The Greater Mekong Regional Strategy was produced by this office in February 2004.

USAID/Vietnam HIV/AIDS programs have increased from \$2,266,000 in FY 2001 to \$4,500,000 in FY 2003. USAID supports a large-scale HIV/AIDS program focused on prevention, mitigation, and care and support in Vietnam. Beginning in 1998, USAID channeled support through its global IMPACT Project implemented by Family Health International. This program focuses comprehensive interventions in three high-prevalence provinces, with innovative approaches for targeting high-risk groups. The program introduced behavioral surveillance to the national surveillance system and still contributes significantly to surveillance efforts nationally. Family Health International also supports social marketing of condoms in six provinces and prevention education nationally through DKT International. Key partners are the Ministry of Health at both the national and provincial level, the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs, UNAIDS, the USAID-funded POLICY Project, and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, with whom Family Health International developed a joint program in voluntary counseling and testing. Additionally, USAID is supporting national policy development through the POLICY Project, including assistance to the Government of Vietnam on its national HIV/AIDS strategy and its ordinance review. POLICY Project programs also support advocacy and greater involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS, research on stigma and discrimination, research on the socioeconomic impact of HIV/AIDS in Vietnam, and the development of improved rehabilitation and harm-reduction policies for injecting drug users. Funding through the International Center for Research on Women is supporting the development of Leadership Advisory Groups to raise awareness, and to reduce stigma and discrimination among key policy makers.

Future efforts under the new Mekong Regional Strategy will build on these country efforts and expand regional activities to prevent cross-border transmission.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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*Prepared for USAID by TvT Global Health and Development Strategies/Social & Scientific Systems, Inc.,  
under The Synergy Project*

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**April 2004**

